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FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9032

INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS IMMEDIATE
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 5046

RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 2508

RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO PRIORITY 1014

RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA PRIORITY 0963

RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 1849

RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL PRIORITY 4600

RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 1979

RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON PRIORITY 2656

RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG PRIORITY 2675

RUEHBAD/AMCONSUL PERTH PRIORITY 0803

RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC

RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

RHHJJPI/USPACOM HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 JAKARTA 000986

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EAP, EAP/MTS, EAP/MLS

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TAGS: PREL PGOV EAID ID BM

SUBJECT: BURMA -- INDONESIAN FRUSTRATION WITH REGIME GROWS

Classified By: Pol/C Joseph Legend Novak, reasons 1.4 (b+d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Indonesians are frustrated with the Burmese regime's response to Cyclone Nargis. The GOI has already sent some assistance and President Yudhoyono has sent a letter to Than Shwe offering more support, but the regime has not yet responded. Indonesian legislators are harshly criticizing the GOI and ASEAN for what they see as a timid response to the regime's inept handling of the situation. No one has been fooled by the regime's May 10 "constitutional" referendum.

¶2. (C) SUMMARY (Con'd): Following up on the USG-sponsored conference in March in Jakarta, Mission is working with the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and local NGOs to organize a May 21-23 visit by Burmese monks and a photo exhibition. Over all, recent events in Burma have only heightened Indonesian exasperation with the regime, with a key legislator telling Pol/C that he doubts the ASEAN Charter will receive legislative approval any time soon END SUMMARY.

THE GOI TRIES TO HELP

¶3. (C) The GOI is frustrated over the Burmese regime's response to Cyclone Nargis. Poloff discussed relief for victims of the cyclone with Ade Sukendar, Deputy Director for East Asian and Pacific Affairs at the Department of Foreign Affairs (DEPLU), on May 16. Poloff briefed Sukendar on USG relief efforts and underscored the need for all countries to press the Burmese regime to allow international relief operations to reach people in need.

¶4. (C) Sukendar agreed that the humanitarian situation for cyclone victims was at the critical stage and that the Burmese regime was not helping matters. He outlined the following steps that Indonesia had taken in this area:

-- President Yudhoyono has written to Senior General Than Shwe expressing condolences and urging that the Burmese government allow international assistance. Yudhoyono cited Indonesia's own very positive experience with international relief in Aceh after the 2004 tsunami. The Burmese ruler has not responded.

-- Via Indonesian military aircraft, the GOI has already shipped relief supplies, including food, blankets, tents and clothing to Rangoon. (Note: Sukendar was part of the team that delivered these supplies.) The Indonesian Embassy in Rangoon had also provided relief supplies.

-- GOI officials had offered two military engineering and medical teams. The Burmese government has not yet responded to that offer. An army lieutenant colonel and military physician remain in Rangoon to coordinate with Burmese authorities.

-- Two Indonesian NGOs offered to send medical teams to Burma. Burmese authorities have not responded to this offer.

¶ 15. (C) Indonesian officials are frustrated at the Burmese regime's lack of responsiveness regarding offers of assistance. Sukendar said FM Wirajuda would try to press Burma to accept these and other international offers of assistance during the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' meeting in Singapore on May 19, though the GOI was not optimistic that the regime would accede to the request.

A HARSH REACTION AMONG LEGISLATORS

¶ 16. (C) Members of the Indonesian legislature (DPR) are angry that the GOI and ASEAN have not taken a more assertive stance re cyclone relief in Burma. Echoing comments from other members, key legislator on Burma issues Djoko Susilo told Pol/C on May 16 that he and his fellow parliamentarians had pressed the Yudhoyono administration at the highest levels on

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this issue. Susilo charged that ASEAN's failure to engage Burma effectively on relief and other issues had ceded ground to China and India. This, he argued, only increased those countries' influence over the regime at the expense of ASEAN members -- "Indonesia and the rest of ASEAN are showing how marginalized they are, proving that they are totally unable to police their own region and help their own people."

¶ 17. (SBU) Indonesian academics and journalists have also attacked the Indonesian government and ASEAN for their response to the disaster. Leading the charge was influential Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) Deputy Executive Director Rizal Sukma, who published a strongly worded op-ed in the leading Indonesian-language daily "Kompas." Sukma--who is Achenese--underscored the importance of Indonesia's experience with international relief following the tsunami. He strongly criticized the GOI for its refusal to support discussion of the issue in the UN Security Council. In a subsequent meeting with DepPol/C, Sukma criticized the ASEAN foreign ministers for waiting until May 19 to meet on the matter.

ZERO SUPPORT FOR THE REFERENDUM

¶ 18. (C) With Susilo, Pol/C also raised Burma's recent constitutional referendum. He underscored that the regime had engineered a sham process to lend a veneer of democratic legitimacy to a constitution that included no genuine input from the Burmese people. Susilo agreed and said DPR members regarded the referendum as fundamentally flawed -- "No one in Indonesia supports this phony referendum held in the middle of a national tragedy."

¶ 19. (C) DEPLU official Sukendar told poloff that the Indonesian government was disappointed that the regime did not heed ASEAN's call to make the referendum adhere to international standards. He said, however, that the GOI did not currently plan to issue any public statements on the matter.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE ASEAN CHARTER

¶ 10. (C) Susilo told Pol/C that the Burmese regime's failure

to deal effectively with the cyclone and its "promulgation of a phony referendum" would have implications for the DPR's consideration of the ASEAN Charter. Many Indonesian legislators were already dissatisfied with the Charter's weak provisions on democracy and human rights. Susilo said legislators planned to hold further hearings on the matter and predicted a rocky road ahead for the Charter in the DPR.

MAINTAINING FOCUS ON BURMA

¶11. (U) As a follow-up to the March 6-7 civil society conference on Burma that Mission organized, Mission continues to work with Indonesian civil society groups to keep public attention focused on Burma. In support of this goal, NDI and several Indonesian NGOs are helping to organize the visit of several Burmese monks to Jakarta, May 21-23.

¶12. (U) The monk's tour will include a number of public events, including the opening of a photographic exhibit that will highlight the situation in Burma. Foreign Minister Wirajuda has been invited to address the opening of the exhibit, although his participation is not yet confirmed. The monks will also meet Indonesian parliamentarians, religious leaders of various faiths, and civil society groups.

EXASPERATION IN INDONESIA

¶13. (C) Over all, recent events in Burma have only heightened Indonesian exasperation with the regime. As noted, this will likely impact the legislative deliberations over the ASEAN Charter. The bad news is also reverberating further: the GOI itself is coming under some fire, as is

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ASEAN. In the meantime, Mission will continue to work with local NGO's to stimulate interest in the Burmese situation in Indonesia. Next week's NDI-sponsored visit by the monks should help do that.

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